CONTRIBUTIONS OF DR. DEBOW FREED AND OHIO NORTHERN UNIVERSITY

HON. MICHAEL G. OXLEY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 27, 1995

Mr. OXLEY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the great work being done at Ohio Northern University by both the staff and students which has recently won the school an outstanding rating as one of the premier institutions in the Midwest. Ohio Northern was ranked fourth in the Midwest by U.S. News & World Report in its ninth annual ''America's Best Colleges.'' This has been the second straight year Ohio Northern has been ranked fourth in the Midwest. The ranking includes 144 similar institutions in 12 States. Institutions are evaluated through various statistical measures with a survey of academic reputation by 2,700 college presidents, deans and admissions directors. Data measure student selectivity, faculty resources, financial resources, retention rate and alumni satisfaction. Ohio Northern continues to have a talented student body, capable faculty, strong academic programs, and high standards. For example, 1 out of 10 ONU students is a high school valedictorian. This year, 262 valedictorians are enrolled at the university. Incredibly, it should not be overlooked that ONU has been operating with a balanced budget for more than 30 consecutive years. For these reasons and numerous others not mentioned, I would like to extend my congratulations and best wishes to this fine institution which really is an asset to the people and State of Ohio.

THE FOREST BIODIVERSITY AND CLEARCUTTING PROHIBITION ACT OF 1995

HON. JOHN BRYANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 27, 1995

Mr. BRYANT of Texas. Mr. Speaker, with my colleague Christopher Shays, I am reintroducing today the Forest Biodiversity and Clearcutting Prohibition Act of 1995.

For years I have sought to protect native forest biodiversity by ending clearcutting and other forms of even-age logging and allowing only selection management of federal lands that are logged. This is the moderate approach toward forest protection. It does not reduce timber production.

This year's legislative agenda, particularly the timber salvage rider, makes this forest management approach all the more appropriate and necessary.

Forests are under assault from expanded salvage logging and the weakening of environmental protections. The Forest Biodiversity Act we are introducing is a moderate reform that allows logging while avoiding the wasteful destruction of forest resources.

Most Americans who are aware of them are appalled by clearcuts. But many of our citizens have the same misconception that I once did—that federally owned forests are protected from such devastation. They don't realize that the U.S. Forest Service and other agencies do not stand watch to protect our publicly owned forests, but are timber brokers. These agencies arrange for the cutting of timber and its sale—often below the cost to U.S. tax payers and they are using even-age variants of clearcutting—such as seedtree, shelterwood, and heavy salvage—as the predominant logging practices in Federal forests. Most people don't know that these Government agencies then bulldoze and replant, resulting in even-age timber plantations of only one species or two.

If current plans are followed, the remaining diversity in the 60 million acres available for commercial logging on Federal land will be eliminated and each of those acres transformed into timber plantation within the next 15 to 20 years.

The Forest Service and other agencies are using even-age logging in spite of substantial evidence that selection management—cutting individual trees, leaving the canopy and undergrowth relatively undisturbed—is more cost-efficient and has a higher benefit-cost ratio.

Selection logging is more labor intensive, creating more jobs for timber workers, but it avoids the high up-front costs of site preparation and planting. The result is productive logging operation without the elimination of native biodiversity diversity in the forest, without the indiscriminate mowing down of huge stands of trees, leaving only shrubs and bare ground.

The Forest Biodiversity and Clearcutting Prohibition Act would ban clearcutting in its various forms. It would require that Federal land managers maintain the native mixture of tree species, would create a Committee of Scientists to provide independent scientific advice to Federal agencies regarding logging, and would ban logging in roadless areas, in order to save them intact so Congress may decide their permanent status.

My proposal is aimed at protecting the diversity of our nation's forests, and the habitats they provide to wildlife, while demanding sound, proven forest management activities. Mr. SHAYS and I invite every Member to join us in seeking this badly-needed reform.

REPEALING THE DAVIS–BACON ACT

HON. NICK SMITH

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 1995

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, the time has long since passed for the repeal of the Davis-Bacon Act. Yet, this outdated piece of legislation, along with all of its adverse effects, is still a bulwark of the United States labor law. The Davis-Bacon Act should be repealed for several important reasons:

First, it violates Americans' right to contract freely with one another.

Second, it has inequitable effects between people of different races.

Third, it serves no interest other than to protect the wages of white unionized construction labor.

Fourth, it adds over a billion dollars each year directly to Federal Government expenditures.

The Davis-Bacon Act was passed in 1931 amidst a sharp decline in construction activity and falling wages and prices that characterized the Great Depression. Its intent was twofold; First, it aimed to halt the decline of wages. Second, Davis-Bacon intended to prevent blacks, migrant workers, and carpetbagging contractors from competing for contracts that had typically been awarded to local, white unionized labor.

How did the act attempted to achieve these objectives? By requiring that construction workers on federally financed projects be paid the local prevailing wage rate. This prevailing wage, as determined by the Department of Labor is nothing more than the union wage. In other words, this act gives the Secretary of Labor the authority to set the minimum wage for construction workers at a rate greater than that determined by the forces of supply and demand. In effect, this requirement to pay an artificially high wage precludes most minority-owned and nonunionized firms from bidding for government construction contracts since they cannot afford to pay union wages. Consequently, the Davis-Bacon Act serves to protect the jobs and inflated wages of predominately white unionized labor by insulating them from lower cost competition. It effectively grants the higher cost, unionized contractors their own private monopoly over federally funded construction projects.

But there is another effect that follows directly from the required payment of prevailing wages. Since the Federal Government is prohibited by law from awarding contracts to lower wage, lower cost construction firms, it necessarily spends an excess of what it needs to in order to get the job done. And guess who is paying the difference. In fact, Davis-Bacon adds over a billion dollars each year directly to Federal Government expenditures, not to mention the additional billions added to private expenditures on projects that are partially federally funded. That means you and I are forced to subsidize the multitude of artificially and unnecessarily expensive construction projects because back in 1931, the Government granted a monopoly over the contracts to such projects to a small group of unionized construction workers.

The claim by some of my colleagues and supporters of the act that Davis-Bacon simply recognizes existing wages as determined by the local market, and therefore, adheres to free market principles, indicates a serious misunderstanding of the process through which the free market works. A free market, with competitively determined wages and prices, needs neither government recognition nor enforcement in order to properly function. These are the prices and wages that would exist in the absence of the Department of Labor. The very fact that the Davis-Bacon Act was deemed necessary to require and enforce the payment of prevailing wages indicates that these are not the wages that would prevail in the free market.

If the only group of people whom this legislation benefits is a small number of predominately white, unionized labor, while imposing significant costs on minority and nonunion construction workers, as well as every taxpayer in the form of increased Federal Government expenditures, then you might ask, how has Davis-Bacon remained the law for 64 years? The act has stubbornly survived precisely because it has a highly unified, powerful constituency. Organized labor groups lobby